

Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00482 222204Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P 221700Z DEC 77

FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1211

INFO AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY

AMCONSUL MONTREAL

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE QUEBEC 0482

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJ: GOVERNMENT CLEARS GARNEAU

1. THE PQ GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY (DEC. 21) CLEARED LIBERAL DEPUTY AND FORMER FINANCE MINISTER RAYMOND GARNEAU OF ANY INVOLVEMENT IN THE QUEBEC LIQUOR CORPORATION (SAQ) SCANDAL (SEE QUEBEC 462). JUSTICE MINISTER MARC-ANDRE BEDARD, ACTING IN RESPONSE TO GARNEAU'S RECENT EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO CLEAR HIS NAME, TOLD THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY THAT, ALTHOUGH THE INVESTIGATION OF THE ALLEGED KICKBACK AND PATRONAGE OPERATION CONTINUES, "NO DEPUTY HAD PARTICIPATED IN ANY CRIMINAL ACT IN CONNECTION WITH THIS AFFAIR".

2. THE WAY IS NOW CLEAR FOR GARNEAU, A FAVORITE OF PARTY BOSSES, TO MAKE HIS RUN FOR THE PROVINCIAL LIBERAL PARTY LEADERSHIP. HIS CANDIDACY HAS BEEN AN OPEN SECRET FOR MONTHS, AND HE SAID YESTERDAY THAT HIS FINAL DECISION WILL BE ANNOUNCED "IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS".

3. COMMENT: CYNICS MAY SEE A MACHIAVELLIAN TOUCH IN THE PQ DECISION TO REMOVE THE CLOUD FROM GARNEAU'S NAME. LE DEVOIR
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PUBLISHER CLAUDE RYAN, WHOSE POSSIBLE CANDIDACY MAKES THE PQ DISTINCTLY UNEASY, COULD WELL WALK INTO THE LIBERAL NOMINATION SHOULD HE REVERSE HIS DECISION NOT TO RUN. THE PQ WOULD SURELY PREFER A SHARP INTRA-PARTY FIGHT RATHER THAN SEE RYAN SIMPLY ANOINTED AS THE LIBERAL MESSIAH AT THE PARTY'S LEADERSHIP CONVENTION NEXT SPRING.
BOSWELL

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Message Attributes

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